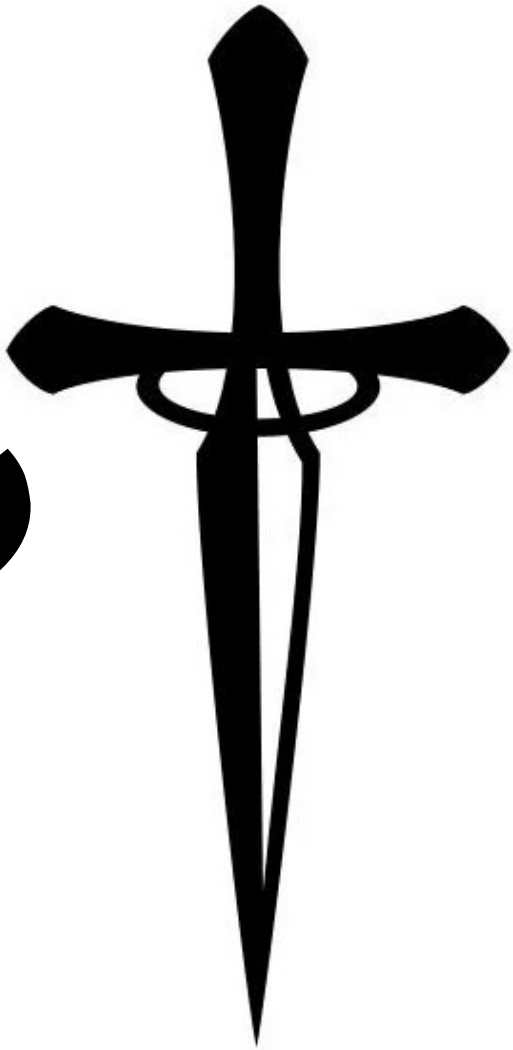
Be Gay Do Crime



A 'Mary Nardini Gang' Reader

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Among the discordant chorus of anons who penned the defining texts of the queer anarchist network Bash Back!, none was more fervent in its glorification of criminal desire, decadent hedonism, and social undoing than the Milwaulkee-based Mary Nardini Gang. Their fiery "Towards the Queerest Insurrection" still circulates as an integral manifesto of riotous queerness, while the "Criminal Intimacy" and "Whore Theory" have made their more subterranean way into innumerable conversations and correspondences.

Ten years later, the secretive group supplements these collected writings with a subtle retrospective. Carefully unlocking the hidden layers of their theses on insurrection, they face up to what they got wrong, concede that the world ended somewhere between the Greek insurrection of 2008 and now, and insist upon the vital task of ushering new worlds into being as we live amid the decomposition and cataclysmic death throes of the old one. To their theses on insurrection, they prepend a new arcana tooled for opening onto the queerest of outsides.

Dedicated to their friends among the dead, this pocket edition is a necromantic mirror, an encrypted message to old loves, and an invitation to those finding these words for the first time.

~ from the Contagion Press 2018 edition

BE GAY, DO CRIME

An Introduction

For Quincy Brinker, who, by disrupting the talk of yet another washed-up academic trying to write Marsha and Sylvia out of Stonewall, reminded us that not even the dead will be safe if our enemy is victorious.

For Feral Pines, last seen by some of her friends throwing rocks at police, by others in an assembly plotting psychic warfare against the fascists, and by others dancing and then defacing some fascist insignia in the moments before her death.

For Chris Chitty, who would surely use this opportunity to insult the insulters while transmitting some brilliant insight about where we have been and where we are going.

For Ravin Myking, whose beauty caused the pastor of a homophobic megachurch to froth at the mouth and declare the arrival of wolves to hunt his sheep, and caused the sheep to fall to the ground, speaking in tongues and praying for their absent god.

For Scout and the fires of memory.

For Vlad, ai ferri corti!

For all our friends on the other side, we present these reflections.

Ten years ago, we were seized by a frenzied spirit and, in a trancelike state, received a set of ten weapons for a war we were only just finding the words to describe. We were a cabal of teenage runaways, ne'er-do-wells, what Genet called criminal children, coming *ex nihilo*, from and with nothing but each other. We experienced the whole social order as inimical to freedom, desire, and our preferred relations, but suspected we were not alone in our visceral hatred for this world. So we encoded these tools — visions of excess and otherness — into a slim zine and sent it to the ends of the earth. For a decade we've followed it, across borders linguistic and militarized, to find the comrades (in a sense inalienable from, as Chris Chitty argued, the word's originary homoerotic implications) who received this same transmission: queer insurrection.

During that time, we stole away on trains with forged documents, on fraudulent flights, and in the cars of strangers who picked us up en route to one encounter after another. We found each other in forest encampments, communes at the center of cities, at blockades against the storm called progress, and in revelry within the hollowed out shells of deindustrialization. We fought enemies minute and gargantuan on streets and in alleyways. We were there when cities were burned, buildings occupied, boutiques looted, ports blockaded, wanna-be bashers humiliated, nazis punched. We delivered an empty coffin to the doorsteps of a killer cop, threw fire into the home of a john who killed a trans woman, and more through bank windows in the name of those imprisoned for refusing a similar fate. We instigated the wildest queer riots in a generation outside the gates of summits of the global elite, and again when an apologist for fascism emerged as a "dangerous faggot" in the hallowed halls of the intelligentsia.

We found our way into reading groups and meetings, waited for the men to stop speaking, and spoke only to be misunderstood. Misunderstood except by our friends, for whom we stockpiled pepperspray and stunguns because we wanted them alive, turned tricks to pay bail because we wanted them free, walked out of grocery stores because we wanted them fed, scammed universities to bring them to our cities, sold our time at strategic

institutions so we could give them everything, got really good at showing specific forms of care (so good we found better hustles), waited with cigarettes and blankets outside the jails because we hated the idea of them in there alone, prepared for attacks like we would for a night with lovers, dedicated books to each other and our beloved dead because these words mean nothing outside of the relationships which give them traction. We swore oaths to keep each others' secrets and keep each other alive. To hold fiercely to that brilliant intimacy we shared in moments of which we can never speak, to never speak our names either, to always speak sideways in handwritten letters on the sides of buildings, delivered by hand between traveling friends, or mailed innocuously under the eyes of guards and censors.

In the long tradition of queer criminality, we've expropriated literally everything we could. We wrote anthems and journals of exegesis, tended archives and prison distros, scammed pages by the thousands. We filled parcels with stolen fineries and sent them with love notes to distant friends. We determined each other deserving of the ten thousand things. We've fumbled through learning a thousand techniques of healing our broken bodies and spirits. We mastered the art of the *dérive*, wandering by instinct alone through the darkened streets of the varied metropoles seeking some ineffability we still can't name. We've experimented with every permutation of drugs and hormones to find the alchemy that opens us up to the world. We developed addictions chasing highs between one uprising and the next, and later helped one another find other ways. We experimented badly with dozens of models for new relations, but continued even at our worst, because we learned the hard way that disposability isn't an option. Eventually, aching flesh and the plant kingdoms revealed their secret languages. We learned love languages too: the inimitable joy of gifts and quiet declarations and eternities of now-time spent in affinity and in affection.

Now-time: a hard-won concept we only learned by way of a sequence of loss. We've hurt each other and had to learn to pick up the pieces of shattered relations. We've been betrayed too, but are disinclined to

spill much ink on sellouts and turncoats. We've run away and we've returned humbled. Our friends and lovers have been taken from us, locked in cages, suicided by cops, burned up in dance parties at the margins of gentrifying cities. We know that our time with each other is fleeting, so we fight for every moment of interdependence and complicity.

This spring, along with the flowers, an image bloomed within some small nodes of the world wide web. A skeleton, dressed as a pirate, bearing a torch named 'anarchy,' with 'communes' emblazoned upon her chest, 'round bombs' around her hat and 'free love' on a pin. A sword hangs from her belt and she bears a scroll proclaiming "be gay! do crime!" The skeleton is frenzied.

At the bottom of the page run the lines: "Many blame queers for the decline of this society — we take pride in this. Some believe that we intend to shred-to-bits this civilization and its moral fabric — they couldn't be more accurate. We're often described as depraved, decadent and revolting — but oh they ain't seen nothing yet."

Here at the foundation of the image, we found words which rang familiar. After a slight slippage in time, we remembered the feeling of those words and having written them. They were initially published as a communique issued by a criminal queer association in an underground periodical published by anarchists in Milwaukee called *Total Destroy.*

Both the gang-form known as Bash Back! and this publication were expressions of a milieu based in Riverwest, a discreet (and at times not so discreet) anarchist neighborhood since the end of World War II. After the war, the nascent bohemian anarchist subculture that had been developing in the war resister camps among writers and art freaks, and some christians, splintered in a diaspora that bore the newly freed mystics to New York and San Francisco. A small enclave ended up in Riverwest and stayed, joining the Galleanist anarchist lineage rooted in the city. The neighborhood remained a constant site of struggle, sometimes armed, with the forces of law and order. In the neighborhood one can find a certain crossroads at which a variety of struggles have intersected: queer struggles, struggles against racism and

fascism, against the police, for the liberation of foodways, along with a dense layering of underground cultures. Distinct anarchist currents consistently cohabitated that neighborhood, debating positions and ways. Around the time of the Nardini Gang communiques, insurrectionaries, queers, race traitors, and eco-extremists came together under the roof of an anarchist space. This particular infoshop (the Cream City Collectives) was one of the many anarchist spaces that had stood at that exact intersection going back decades.

This is the place where we found ourselves when, a few months after the initial publication of "Toward the Queerest Insurrection," emissaries from the future spoke through fires set across the seas. Insurrection broke out. Not in Milwaukee, but in Greece. Civilization died within the bounds of the nation-state mythologized as the epicenter of its birth. The police executed a teenage anarchist named Alexis Grigoropoulos in another long-term anarchist neighborhood, Exarcheia (*ex-*, out of; *-archeia*, rulership). Exarcheia is a place where anarchy, the Beautiful Idea, had never gone quiet, and so when a cop murdered a youth — an encounter so devastatingly routine in the US — there at the crossroads which is now Alexis' hero-shrine, the whole world caught fire. The insurrection had come.

The fires that burned there for seventeen nights sent embers to the far corners of the world, and these found places where the flame could catch. That flame caught in our obscure neighborhood wrapped in rivers, and it changed everything for us. Those seventeen days opened up a narrow gate such as Walter Benjamin proposed existed in each moment. That gate opened up in the bizarre, internationalist, mycelial web woven by anarchists across the globe. All throughout the anarchist galaxy, the messiah came. We bore witness. We saw the river flow backwards. We saw the Event, the Open. The fires lit in Greece spread across the globe as metropoles and suburbs and unceded territories all throughout the world in a non-linear, expanding and evolving polyvalent front, a border between an old world decaying and a new one emerging.

For many, the realization was brought by disaster or insurgency in response to the hidden daily disaster of policing. In the US, the idea spread through the infrastructure of the various nodes created by the insurrectionary anarchists of the preceding decade. The first real encounter with the fire itself, on this continent, occurred in the opening days of 2009 when the city of Oakland burned in response to the police murder of Oscar Grant. By way of solidarity actions and the stories of travelers, anarchists who were present for that opening of the door on the west coast of this accursed nation, spread word that the insurrection had come and everyone should act accordingly.

Bash Back! was one of many currents which took that message to heart. In the context of the network's emergent praxis, a proposal surfaced which insisted on a new form of life: criminal, queer, anarchist. In short, devotion to the new world emerging, indifference to the social order dying, and war with those who would defend its memory or attempt to reanimate its corpse. We realized that time and identity are fictions, but that we are bound to our ancestors and can only heal from the violences by addressing generations of trauma. We realized that the moment was always immanent, and that we simply needed to shift perspectives to access it. Anarchy had always been there beneath the paving stones. And we saw it, and were forever changed, and now had to live according, not in the time that remains, but in the time after. The distribution of the anonymous text "Desert" through green anarchist nodes put forward the proposal that the world would not end in one single gesture of revolution or collapse, but would die as a patchwork, and from that humus would rise new worlds, plural.

In the clash with the alt-right we are encountering another of those worlds. Diane di Prima said it best in her revolutionary letters:

> And it seems to me the struggle has to be waged on a number of different levels:
> they have computers to cast the I Ching for them
> but we have yarrow stalks

and the stars
it is a battle of energies, of force-fields, what the newspapers call a battle of ideas

Since the moment when the Bash Back! network encountered the clash of the new world breaking into existence, we've experimented in ways to live in this new world with which we're bound up in some divine act of co-creation. We, and these words, have gone to the corners of the world, announcing, as the frenzied skeleton above, our magic: Be Gay! Do Crime!

This development of means of living and fighting in this new world has looked different for each of us. We have suffered unimaginable losses and learned a thousand ways of healing. We studied to become specialized practitioners of these varied modalities. We built networks of care to support each other through betrayals, repression, and the death of our friends. We learned to care for each others' wounds and cover each others' rents. Many of us work with spirits and ancestors. Some people got into publishing. Some moved to the wilds and are learning its mysteries. We have abolitionist fanatics. We have antifascist researchers who've committed their lives to documenting the movement of our ancestral enemy. We've learned to fight, to attack, to hold space afterwards. We have been at every uprising in the last decade and have shared understandings by way of them. Those of us who continued the path of sex work are now struggling against the State's deployment of new repressive and cybernetic techniques. Some people have gone entirely underground. Some have learned the sacred methods of altering the body. As we speak, people are studying the stars to find their way. Some messengers are still wandering, many have stayed put and are now deepening their animistic relationship to place (yes, in the cities too). We have among us practitioners of sado-masochism, queer performance, afro-futurism, chaos magic, "public health," herbalism, diasporic traditions, long-form prisoner correspondence, poetry.

This panoply could be looked at as a set of tactical discussions, but this view must be turned on its head. These are not methods to bring about the new world, these are ways of living that assume its immanent being. We

have continued from the proposal published ten years ago in "Criminal Intimacy" that our relationships are our strength and that those relationships were forged in the moments we found each other while the doors stood open. Strategy does not precede the moment but emerges in its aftermath. Insurrection is the messiah and it has already come. The question since has been how to proceed. It is no surprise that anarchists who turn toward mysticism (Fredy Perlman, Ursula Le Guin, or Diane di Prima) at some point come to study *the Tao* — the way.

We proceeded, despite the end of the world, seeking joy everywhere we could. Our communiques took the ruins for granted and we insisted upon dancing amid them. Sex parties, dance parties, street parties, reading parties — partying emerged as a central form in that frenzied moment. Our later inquiries into the sacred nature of the revel — into the bacchanals and nighttime sabbats — revealed an intrinsic relationship between partying and the world-making arts. In our parties, we opened onto connection with each other, onto other realms and other gestures.

The realization of the insurrectionary dimension of the party proved dangerous precisely for its potential to be reified as the party of insurrection. By way of the circulation of a small blue book[1], some who reveled in flames alongside us became fixated on the proposed re-emergence of the party form, the very structure of synthesis that had dominated the revolutionary imaginations of lost generations. Where we came to understand the party as spiritual, they desired a political party. Where we sought forms of connection, they submitted to an apparatus based first and foremost upon separation. The party as proposed by those who penned the little blue book was to be invisible and thereby avoid the failure of the past century's party form. We remain unconvinced. We had already experienced the death of the party, and had already dealt with the authoritarian cult tendencies that followed from it. When the formal dimension of the Bash Back! network had run its course, we quickly analyzed the moment so as to move beyond it.

1 *The Coming Insurrection,* the Invisible Committee.

Following an excerpt from "Criminal Intimacy," a section of the conclusion to *Queer Ultraviolence* titled "On the Party" put it this way:

> In describing those participants in Bash Back! as a *form-of-life*, I'm making an effort to discard a whole range of concepts and ways of thinking that should be entirely useless to us moving forward. In particular, I want to totally be done with the notions of identity politics and identity activism. BB! shouldn't be understood as a sequence of activist endeavors, nor as an articulation of a militant identity politic (to the extent that it can, it was a failure). BB! was never about queer issues or queer politics. Instead, the project took as its issue the lives of its participants. Rather than the motifs of victimization and charity regurgitated *ad nauseam* in activist circles, the BB! tendency took as its starting point *queer life itself*. Those within the tendency organized a space within which they could genuinely live, and a network by which to defend that space. I experienced BB! as an amalgamation of desires, dispositions, acts, processes, gestures, and complicities. BB! is as much wrapped up in sexual practice as in criminal act, as much in strategy as in style. The process of BB! and the emergence of its corresponding *form-of-life* demands to be read less as a what or a who but instead as a how. This how, is the how of organization, but also as much of survival, of violence, of love, of life itself. And so, whatever the limitations of what Bash Back! was, it is the how (the way) that truly demonstrates the insurrectionary potential that I celebrate.

We took life itself as our project. Whatever rhetoric it may employ, no Party can say the same. The very function of the Party is to expand its own operation by vampirizing the life energy of all subsumed within it. We

took that organizationalist dead end as a point of departure and had already begun other experiments. Sadly, by this point the straight comrades already stopped paying attention to that process of clarification.

We've learned a great deal in the last decade, most of which can be summarized by simply saying that we did not know what we were doing. Finding ourselves now in this position to speak across time, having an opportunity to reissue these words to some who might find them for the first, we have a responsibility to clarify: *These initial words are not political; they are magical.*

The most studied practitioners of magic will tell you something remarkably similar to the lifelong insurrectionaries: the secret is really to begin. Between the inquiries of the chaos magicians and the shared reflections of insurrection oriented anarchists, a whole host of techniques emerge in common: the means to choose a story and make it real by applying energy, the invocation of the dead, queer ancestral working, necromantic visits to Emma Goldman's grave, the reproduction of apocryphal texts, conjuration by way of magical language, the necessity of abundant sacrifice, fires set to purify, rendezvous below the moon's fullness and attacks carried out beneath its dark, rites of mourning & revenge, raising hell at the pulpits of the false priests, the interpretation of dreams and omens, the secret names of our beloveds and their encrypted sigils scrawled across city walls, the visionary states of *jouissance* and spirit-contact by way of dance, the decentering of the self and the openness to the other, the pacts made at the crossroads — these are keys to an otherworldly litany, a grammar of worldmaking by way of ritual action.

Worldmaking, because we actually effect the web of power — experientially and reciprocally — by way of our engagement. You see, the world really did end for us in December of 2012 when we lost Ravin. While the world waited out the clock to see if the machines would self-sabotage, we scrawled 'No Future' as epitaph for this world we were leaving, not as an effort to preemptively snuff out our light, but rather to light up another world which was already in germinating, there beneath the skin. We needed

skillsets to engage our friends among the dead, and they in turn gestured toward an animist worldview, toward the enspirited world. We live in a world haunted by all the ghosts of a genocidal leviathan, where the land is full of bones screaming out for vengeance and the very architecture of these cities filled by all the dead who built it, where every spectacle of inclusion is wracked by the *evil eye* cast by the excluded. We've learned to be in relation, that any space has only been taken back for enchantment and reciprocity in co-creation with these spirits.

When we look at the transmutations which the anarchist galaxy has undergone in the dreamtime of the past decade, it is undeniably other than the heteronormative, boring void into which we first issued these enchantments. Strong, varied and dynamic queer currents course through our space, tracing previously unimaginable constellations of thought and lives. All the best and all the worst of what we wrote, all our illuminations and our omissions, came true. The most dismissible and petty conflicts in our little world have been elevated to a global and even cosmic stage. The locks we picked opened doors we could barely imagine in strong hearts wherever they lay. If only we had already internalized Diane di Prima's insistence that "you can have whatever you ask for" so "ask for everything."

Because these are magical words, and because our accomplices hear them and respond even beyond the veil of death, we cannot afford to miscommunicate. Let's hold a mirror up to our ten weapons and supply them with their necessary caveats. These ten, taken together, form a sort of minor arcana:

I. Queerness in its negative sense

II. Normalcy

III. Social war

IV. Queerness as conflict

V. The other, the excluded

VI. Repression, force relations

VII.Attack!

VIII.A subterranean riotous inheritance

IX.Space, terrain, excess

X. Refusal, the self-described anarchist

In furtherance of this tarot, we present the reversals:

X

Hold onto that moment when you first called yourself an anarchist. Whatever your story, surely it was a refusal, a preference not to, saying "no." You may not realize it, but this is the first time in your life you set a boundary with a world that attempts to erode your capacity to do so. Find that moment and that affect and hold firmly to it. Whatever else may be taken from you, they cannot take this. Let's dispense with the tired conversation about the individual and the collective. We need each other and still each of us needs recourse to that intimately personal affect. Can we leave it at that? In the trying times, when we feel alone against the world, we will always have that initiating refusal. If we tend that little candle, we can always find our way, back to each other if necessary. The anarchist tension adapts to whatever comes next.

IX

We received and will do our best to transmit this mystery: queer criminality. This is an ancestral current, a we, inherited from a long and varied line of rioters, thieves, writers, hustlers, mystics, ranters, freaks, and artists. Like the descendants of any ancestral line, we are the currently incarnated members of that spirit house. Nothing began with us: we are simply the present bearers of that weak messianic potential to make it whole again, to redeem all our dead, by way of heaven on earth. In all that we do, we are in co-creation with these spirits. Let's learn to do it well. When we try to take space — or more realistically, to hold onto it against the annihilating flows of progress — it is for these reciprocal relationships between each other and all

of our ghosts. We are fighting for the survival of a way of life: one criminal, queer, anarchic, mystic, other. Each of these predicates a source of strength, a lineage, a collection of techniques for the survival of people this world has tried thoroughly to destroy. This is why we strive for excellence and excess in all that we do. It has always been about queer forms of life. Beware those who speak about other lives but not of the corpses in their mouth, or of the screaming bones upon which they walk.

VIII

The critique of assimilation is still only understood halfway. The dominant line within the radical queer corners of the professional activist world and the school-to-publishing pipeline holds that it is enough to simply take the right political positions. So long as one speaks the right language, ethical (here meaning happy) life exists within Leviathan. The impulse to critique assimilation, in its first instance, refuses this acquiescence. Be wary of any who remind too quickly that we all make sacrifices under capitalism. That is true, of course, but remember that to sacrifice is to make something sacred, to give it up for the spirits. This world conditions us to lose things easily because it is always taking them away. We choose to take back power over what we give up, for whom, and why. You'll recognize your true friends by the way they answer these three questions. There is a subtle difference between careerist and conspirator-within-a-given-institution. One way or another, those with nothing to lose but each other, and by extension a whole world to gain, remember one another and act accordingly. It's a matter of priority: this dead world, or the ones we are cultivating.

VII

Attack! Because it is always available, and because it is the real marker of the boundaries of our little propulsive heterotopias — worlds plural. World-making gives us the ability to move our prefer-not-to into a sideways gesture, a preferring differently, otherworldly. The question of opacity (the closet, passing) is an old one for us. The queers who came before us navigated with several strategies, and it's up to us to look critically at all of

them. It's all drag: a mask on our emergent world. The mask conceals the real in order to make attack possible. Realness is always a game played with normalcy. Those who haven't realized this are dangerous indeed. An attack of whatever intensity is a small door through which the real and its world enters. Its world is animistic — take this into account when choosing your target. All the cosmos is alive and watching and actually matters. If you've followed us this far into the labyrinth, you can always call to presence the energy for even the smallest attack. Let that possibility be Ariadne's thread as we go further. Let these rituals signal to conspirators, embodied and not.

VI

Repression is the attempt on the part of a decaying world to smother new ones in their infancy. We've withstood them all. The Holocaust and the aids crisis respectively destroyed two moments in the preceding century when our world outgrew their comfort for it. In both cases the revolutionaries and the otherwise marginalized died first. Entire generations of our elders have been stolen from us. Remember this when you forget who you are. Remind your friends, too, if they forget. The state has soft means at its disposal. The criminalization of public parks goes hand in hand with the proliferation of cybernetic cruising apps. The benevolent campaigns of "trafficking reformers" keep sex workers on the streets or worse. The wealthy will afford their prep while people with aids continue to die on their doorsteps. The circulation of the images of particular bodies through social media numbs us with blue light and distracts from the systematic execution of those same excluded bodies. We've only made it this far by fighting repression in all its forms. Pay attention to those worlds that are fighting it differently. Learn from those who fought it before. We'll need all the various techniques against our shared enemy. We need the healing techniques too. We've inherited so much trauma from these failed attempts. But we can choose to heal in these lifetimes, to not pass the shit on.

V

The core of our world is an otherness, and so each of us liminally navigates the other worlds. We stand between, always a little extra, too much for any world but the one we're building between us. Pay attention to where you feel other and whom you feel at home with. This is affinity: knowledge of another, and of their desires and capacities. This isn't deterministic; ancestral traumas can be overcome, but only by those committed to that overcoming. This is a matter of hospitality, of the response of a world to the other at its gates. Never separate any concept of reconciliation — for example, *tikkun olam* — from its spiritual grounding in the vision of a living world, of an enchanted materialism. Resist the impulse for homogeneity. Circulate through whatever worlds will have us. Jailbreak the others.

IV

To recognize queerness in conflict means to address the residue of a dead world within us — trauma in our bodies, possession by egregores, lies on our tongues. Be humble; know that you are addressing wounds inflicted upon countless generations. Be gentle with yourself and each other in these matters, but remember that healers often have the bloodiest hands.

III

Social war, understood as a movement to expand upon this or that limited conception of struggle, gestures welcomingly to the other, includes the stories of resilience and subversion which disorder any tendency toward a scientific (read: systematized) fetish on the part of militants.

II

We do this because we remember that Normalcy is itself our enemy. Avoid those who read the backs of Foucault books while gleefully flaunting their normalizing impulses. In any insurrectionary space, attend to the freaks. The Norm arms itself with terror, because some truly believe in it. The devotees

of Normalcy — in its psychic, libidinal, affective, disciplinary or ideological forms — will be cops when the insurrection dies.

I

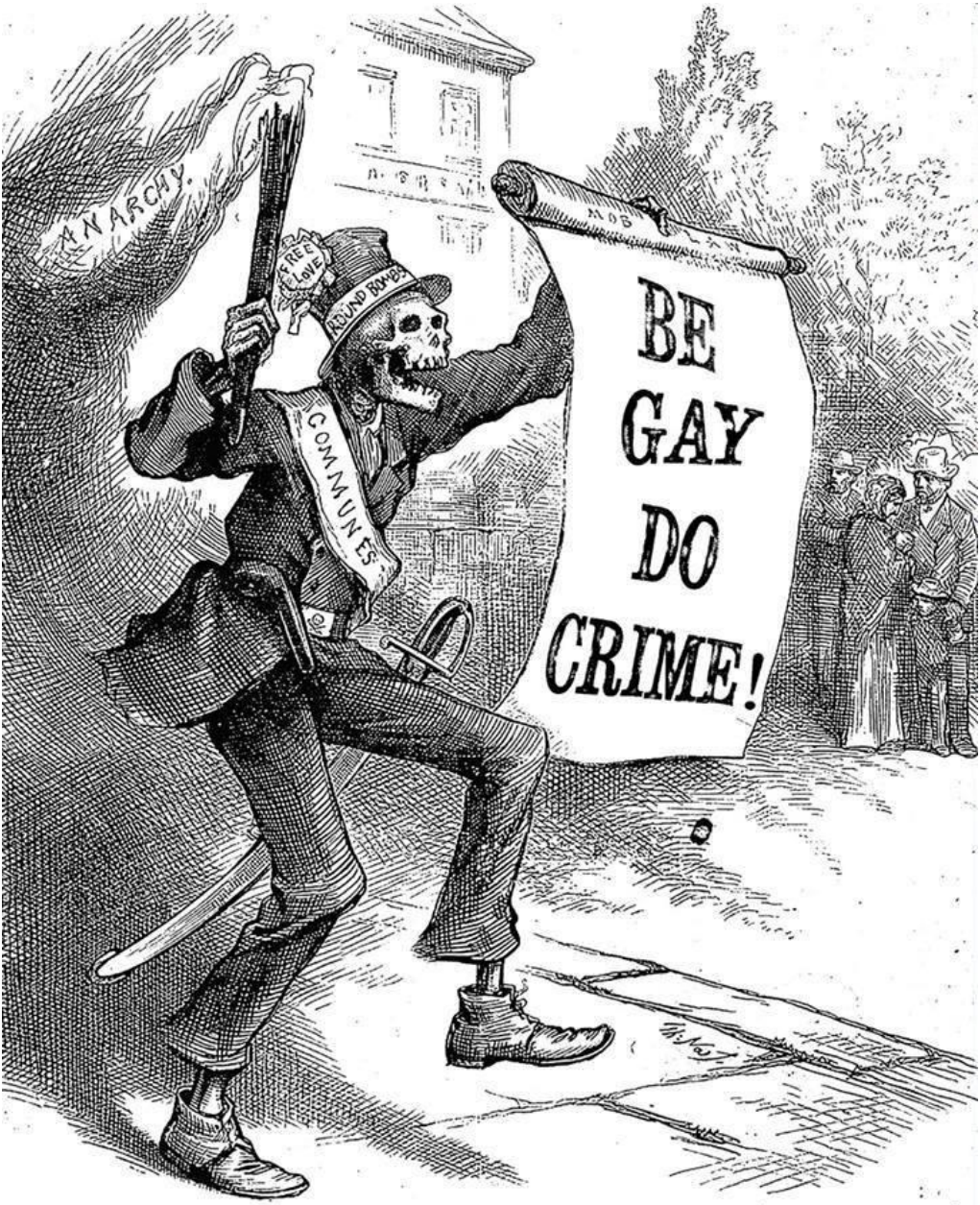
'Q' then, will never be a coherent letter tacked as a bridge on some list of identities. The past decade shows the poverty or ruin of every attempt to do so. We've said already that these words are magic. We might add that they are *wyrd* — the Old English for fate and all the other invisible and nonlinear causalities we are woven into and which gives us the modern word 'weird'. The queerest insurrection demands the weirdest, the most enmeshed in the unseen, the most in relationship with all that teems just beyond the normative filter we are still fighting to unlearn. Find those who straddle that filter, a foot in each world. Share your methods, share what you've learned, share the stories of your dead. The dead we hold in common make us family — some other form of kinship than the Norm and its terror. We need each other today more than ever. We want to win this time, to *win all the time*, and the dead want that too.

0

Here. Now. In this place and time. The mirror of our current inquiry faces the mirror that this project always carried within itself. Mirrors upon mirrors; we are not strangers here. Our enemies have always mobilized the myth of Narcissus against the criminal and queer. These inquisitors and specialists in torture can only do this by subtracting this myth from the enchanted worldview whence it emerges, a view wherein other worlds exist, there are windows between them, and true communication is possible. In the notes to his translation of *The True Grimoire*, the faggot sorcerer Jake Stratton-Kent suggests that this story is in fact an early encryption of scrying — the magical technique in which one uses a mirror to communicate with other spirits and places. Narcissus gazed too long at the underworld and was immortalized as a delicate flower with such a fixed gaze. This is the sign of the immortality of the vegetable world, of the cycle between life and death, of the infinite. Each is slightly other, each a different variation on the

story. We possess the freedom of discernment, choice. Theorists of games refer to the magic circle — the boundary within which the players agree upon the objectives and the rules. Zero: *the magic circle*. Zero: the space of all potential. Be careful what you say in this space; have your wits about you. What happens here extends to all levels. Zero: from nothing and returning to it. Zero: always the Fool, a stranger entering seemingly from nowhere. Who are you? Where are you from and where are you going?

The skeleton has been here, frenzied, before. The meme described above *detourned* a bit of propaganda from California dating back to the 1880s that vilifies the queer and anarchist currents then present on these shores. The skeleton has never left. She remains present along the diasporic threads which have always undermined the southern border. She is the Holy Death. The patron of criminals and queers, of exiles from worlds. She wears other robes but she insists as the constant reminder of our own mortality and of those we've already lost. If the messianic currents within western magical traditions are true — and that the final judgment is the return of the dead — then the passing of that moment means our dead are among us, the ancestors have returned and they are insisting that we have a chance to make it all whole again. The task remains to put our ways in common.



"Many blame queers for the decline of this society—we take pride in this.
Some believe that we intend to shred-to-bits this civilization and it's moral fabric—they couldn't be more accurate.
We're often described as depraved, decadent and revolting—but oh, they ain't seen nothing yet."

Mary Nardini

A Profile of a Milwaukee Anarchist

Mary Nardini was an Italian anarchist who lived and organized in Milwaukee's Bay View neighborhood in the early 20th century. She was revered in the Italian anarchist community as the 'guiding light' of I Dilettanti Filodrammatici del Circolo Studi Sociali (Amateur Thespian Social Studies Club). The Thespians were a group of Italian anarchists who operated a space that was not unlike many contemporary infoshops. Members of the group occupied themselves distributing anarchist literature, hosting discussions, and putting on anti-state and anti-church plays as fundraisers to support anarchist political prisoners.

Bay View's Little Italy, as a community, was known for its general distaste for the church and the state. Folks in the community were deemed troublemakers by religious and pro-government Italians who lived in the Third Ward neighborhood. Among the latter was Reverend August Giuliani. In 1917, Giuliani began a campaign to convert the largely secular Bay View Italians to christianity. He and his choir held weekly revivals, complete with singing and preaching in the streets of Bay View.

In late August of 1917, Mary Nardini and a handful of other anarchists confronted Reverend Giuliani in the streets. They declared themselves anarchists and proclaimed their hatred for the state, the church, laws, and the pope. Visibly shaken and offended, Giuliani and his band left.

He returned the next week. When he and his choir arrived, they saw Mary reading a book on her porch. As Giuliani began his sermon, several anarchists gathered nearby and began singing 'vulgar' italian songs that announced, "We fight the government, we fight the citizens, we are for anarchy!" Soon a crowd of over seventy-five had gathered and were heckling Giuliani. One person in the crowd promised Giuliani, "If you return to Bay View, we'll kill you. We have the lake for people like you!" Fearing for his life, Giuliani fled.

On September 9th , Giuliani returned again, bringing several Milwaukee police officers with him. As he arrived, Mary Nardini was seen yelling into the front door of a house. Within moments, she marched out of the residence with a column of over fifty anarchists following closely behind. The police began roughing up one of the anarchists, resulting in several of the folks in Nardini's crew drawing their guns. What ensued was a shootout between police and anarchists that left two anarchists dead, several people wounded on both sides, and Giuliani running for his life.

In the aftermath, Nardini and over a dozen other anarchists were arrested for rioting. Eleven people, including Nardini, were then indicted for the incident.

On November 24th , while the defendants were in jail awaiting trial, a suspicious package was delivered to Giuliani's church in the third ward. Fearing a retaliation bombing, church servants brought the package to the downtown police station. Sure enough, the package held a bomb. While being inspected the bomb detonated, killing nine police officers, including several who were involved in the Bay View incident. The explosion at the police station marks the most cops killed in any incident in the history of the Milwaukee Police Department.

Though Nardini and her comrades were in police custody at the time of the explosion, the incident irreversibly tainted the jury, and at trial she was found guilty and sentenced to life in prison.

Interview with The Mary Nardini Gang

From Vengeance 3

***VENGEANCE*: Does being a proletarian change for you being a militant queer?**

MARY NARDINI: Being queer complicates the way we experience our role within capitalism. Queer bodies are often forced to sell their labor in ways that would be excluded from traditional marxist narratives of what it means to be a worker. This includes service workers and sex workers. These forms of exploitation problematize the often heteronormative and patriarchal ideas surrounding what is or isn't labor. Ultimately, the positions of queers and proles intertwine—we are the class that has no control over our bodies. This means different things in various situations. But the bosses that manage our time and the queer bashers that manage our gender are clearly all class-enemies.

V: Why does both the Spectacle and also the mainstream gay and lesbian movement seem to only identify with the middle and upper classes, and never with working and poor people? Who benefits from such a narrative?

MN: It is abundantly obvious that the politicians who lead the "lgbt community" are only interested in preserving power for the ruling class.

Political campaigns for gay marriage, gays in the military, and hate crime legislation, only reproduce the capitalist institutions of marriage, military, and the prison industrial complex. And it goes much deeper than that. Representations of queers portray and capitalize on images of wealthy, affluent, white, able-bodied gays and lesbians. You only need to look as far as Will and Grace or a copy of any LGBT magazine to see the way that queer bodies and desires are shaped by capital.

V: Within anarchism, there seems to be a coming clash (or a current clash) between activists and hooligans. Why do you think this is? What are the tensions that have given rise to this division?

MN: To be cheesy and quote The Coming Insurrection: "Everyone finds herself forced to take sides; to choose between anarchy and the fear of anarchy." The divide that is happening in the broader anarchist milieu is also happening among radical queers. I think that a lot of the tension is rooted in that a lot of people have confused radical queer struggle as a safe haven for the worst form of identity politics. They're really sorely mistaken. This isn't about sustaining identities, it is about destroying them.

V: Can you speak about the actions that occurred around the time of the Bash Back Conference and your disappointment with some of the people who responded to those actions?

MN: At the Bash Back! Convergence, a dance-party train occupation. The temporary occupation was an absurd mix of dancing, making-out, and a cacophony of ridiculous chants and singing. This created a situation where people caused a lot of havok, vandalizing the train and reclaiming it as a queered space. A spontaneous street march then erupted from the train. The march attacked luxury cars and pulled shit into the streets.

Someone within the march began pulling newspaper boxes out of the streets and back onto the sidewalk while yelling "this is a peaceful protest." After the newsboxes were removed, a police cruiser literally ran over someone's foot and officers began beating people with their telescoping batons. Four people were arrested.

The next day, all of the liberal, activist types went on a tirade to denounce the previous nights events. A telling anecdote: Three white people stand up in a row, and denounce the occupation as racist, because there were people of color on the train. "There were people of color who actually live in Chicago on that train! They are actually part of the community! That's racist! People were being rude!" Then, two female-bodied people of color who live in Chicago respond, saying that they find everyone disgusting. "Bash Back! isn't about being polite, or nice. Bash Back! means challenging and destroying normalcy. This is going to be rude. It's going to be messy! If you aren't into this, then you're in the wrong place." Everyone is silent for a moment. Then the stack continues. They are ignored and more white activists continue to talk about how the action was racist and alienating to people of color. It continued as folks talked about all the "white dudes with passing privilege" who instigated the situation.

I'm really disgusted by people's actions and sentiments that day, because of their complicity with the police and their silencing of all the bodies that weren't white, cisgendered, and male.

V: Where would you like to see Bash Back! go in the next several years, if the network is going to continue?

MN: I would like to see groups of queer anarchists working to build autonomous power and get more conflictual. I'm really excited about the squat that BB! Memphis just opened for homeless queer/trans youth. I'm really excited about groups distributing free pepper-spray and teaching people to fight. I'm excited about queers kicking the shit out of queer bashers, and always about fighting in the streets. Whether people continue to organize under the name "Bash Back!" or not, I think that the network of wild-ass queers who hate everything is going to keep growing and building autonomous power.

Whore Theory

For the whore, it is of extreme importance to be at all times stunning, both in appearance and intellect. As faithful deviants of femininity, we have a certain responsibility to display a well-versed hatred towards everything pristine and bland. Little boys and girls need more examples of filth in their life; crazy beautiful cunts to admire. They must learn what it is to want, to be whores incapable of holding in and repressing their emotions.

Becoming-whore does not mean anything, so put your fucking notebook down. We are strutting contradictions and we do not care. If you cross us, we will annihilate you and everything you love. If you fuck us, we will break your heart or maybe fall in love and hate you forever. We are addicted to the disgust of society, corrupted Jeune-Filles that know no restraint.

We want to destroy everything, in diamond encrusted high heels. The violence of our desire tastes unlike any other bodily fluid; it is a poisonous venom that only the most masochistic of bodies can encounter and crawl towards for a second helping. We invite men in, waiting for the degradation that will warrant vengeance and until then we just shove their cocks in our mouths and swallow. What-ever.

We gaze at our body's image in every reflection we find and can't help but fuck ourselves all day long, because we are so incredibly beautiful.

Our insecurities are displayed like sparkling gold crowns on top of our pretty heads; we couldn't be more proud (or ashamed) of our many imperfections. We are horribly vain, and every whore knows that only another whore can satisfy her needs.

Whore is not a sexuality, such a thing does not exist. Our orgasms are inseparable from our hatred, from our fashion and fears; nothing makes us cum that doesn't also revolt us in some way or another. We experience this world as an ugly little playground for our fantasies, and these dirty thoughts cannot possibly be contained within any designated arena of "sex". Sex for us is turning heads, scraping knees, and pissing anywhere but in a toilet.

If you see a whore swinging her hips down a busy street, you may notice a furrowed brow while she mutters angrily under her breath. This is because you annoy her with your presence. Every insignificant body that brushes past her is at risk for her hatred. Hatred makes her erect. She wastes no time in forming assumptions about you based on what you're wearing—your shoes are not fierce enough, your walk is not sexy enough, your eyes are not burdened enough. You are nothing compared to the beautiful people that hide in the alleyway, waiting to mug you.

Politics does not interest the whore, it is the whore. Seduced by the incessant pain of living and dying and aching, she is simultaneously afraid of every little thing and fueled with the exhilaration of having nothing to lose. She thinks that to speak logically of this world is pure delusion: rationality is an unnecessary indulgence typical of mumbling pricks. Attempting to define her context or articulate her existence is utterly futile; absolutely nothing about her makes sense. The whore critically engages only with astrology, preferring the opinion of our sky's constellations over the utterance of some dying old white man.

Brilliantly bitter, the whore holds onto grief and anger like precious gems wrapping around her heart; her traumas lovingly swim and pulsate through her veins like tiny shards of glass. A part of her longs for the sadness and disappointment she knows as truth; she is full of emptiness and

boredom in its absence. For her, seeing the world through sorrow is seeing in full color, feeling the sensation of life tingle through each nerve ending on her body. Without it, joy eludes her as well.

The whore is utterly exposed—a raw wound dripping sweet, deadly excrement onto each thing, each person she comes into contact with. She is naked, forever tucking what is sacred into the crevice between her legs for no one else to see. If you look too close, be prepared to lose a limb, a lip, a piece of your fucking heart because what is precious to her is untouchable to you. You worthless shit of a human race.

A proper whore knows, deep down inside of her, why this world pretends to detest her. All her life she has had an irresistible charm that, when coupled with an unbecoming volatility, has the power to reveal to those around her their most unwanted desires. Her ass makes married gentlemen (and their bored wives) fidget incessantly, and her vulgar wit causes dry academics to wet their lips with excitement. Upon her exit, entire rooms breathe a heavy sigh of relief that they are no longer forced to face their quivering perversities. Alone in their modern bedrooms they shamefully jerk off to her image, quietly hating themselves and their crass routine of living.

She is as quick to laugh as she is to cry. When Mercury is in retrograde, she knows that getting out of bed means catastrophe. But even the fucked up alignment of the planets, working hand in hand with this mundane and despicable society, cannot stop her lunacy from being cast onto her surroundings and those around her. The circumstances which make her and fellow whores weep also create potent hysterics, and islands once isolated in insanity come together for a good laugh, and maybe a little revenge.

The whore is a slut, yes, but she is also a bum and a young delinquent; she is a faggot, a queen, an angry dyke, an insurrectional manarchist in heels, a tyrannical tranny. She is everything and nothing, everyone and no one. Glamorous in her many disguises and transparent in her filthy desires. She overflows with love for those spilling over with

hatred, forever enchanted with the beauty hidden beneath this sterile economy of bodies. She enjoys nothing more than spitting on the face of humanity, laughing as her stinking spittle drips down pointed chins to make a satisfying splat on the dirty pavement beneath her feet.

What Is It To Become Beautiful?

In June 2010, people in Oakland, CA revolted, even if only for a few hours. This resulted in the trashing and mass looting of a beauty supply store. The owner of the shop was quoted as saying. "There were tons of them! Not just a few. And they went for the most expensive wigs I had!"

No Justice, No Peace for the hoarders of beauty.

Despite the kindergarten notion that all people are beautiful, most are not. There are many heinous, despicable, and horrifically ugly people in this world. If society views someone as peaceful, honorable, and gorgeous, a Beauty in Becoming must assume the enshrined subject is exactly the opposite. Those seen positively by the ugly at large are most often trying to rip off your snatch, steal from you, or doom your life to misery (See Ghandi-child rapist/state collaborator, Mother Teresa—that anticondom bitch was responsible for the rapid spread of HIV, and FDR—a fucker who ordered japanese americans to concentration camps). To become beautiful is to constantly challenge colonialism and oppression internally and in creative ways externally. Should any person not take up these challenges then they

most certainly are not beautiful. In fact they arent even average. They are fucking ugly.

For those seeking beauty, accept your mind and sex for what it is, in addition to what you want it to be. The desire to modify one's features to conform to the "beauty" of the public pupil is worthlessness instilled. Beauty is not the fraudulent norm. Conversely the desire to fuck who you please or to swap out that tired cock with a brand new pussy is pricelessness willed. Modify your body to complement your soul. Ravish yourself in brilliance. Beauty is the violent and persistent confrontation between your body and Cosmo.

Crave it.

Unfortunately becoming beautiful is more complicated than it may seem. Truth be told a total makeover may not be possible at all. Our exterior beauty has been so rudely taken hostage by patriarchal greed. This Commodification of Beauty may be one of our deadliest enemies. We all feel the need to be fake-pretty. To vomit here, lift weights there, to purchase mascara, or eat practically nothing. Commodified beauty negatively effects every person, anyone who says otherwise is a liar. As long as we chase commodified beauty, and not beauty in actuality, we are cursed to depression, illness, and weakness. No one can pay to become beautiful, only to accentuate their becoming.

Becoming beautiful is the most precious tool in combating liberal extremism. Liberals are ugly, fucking ugly, or fugly. The liberal is terrified of a beauty in becoming. They will lie, cheat, and steal to maintain their dominance over oppressed public relations. Real beauty lies in the truthful. The established liberal fears the truth and the tactics that real change requires. Beauty shits on the hypocritical and foul idea that is the respect for a diversity of tactics. Never respect the tactics of a liberal and do not conflate "liberal" with those actually at higher risk of state repression. Have no patience for those who do. Ultimately, the beautiful threaten the established liberal's class, privilege, and racial superiority.

The beautiful are the only true enemies of fascism. Barack Obama could never successfully wage a war against corporate fascism. He is corporate fascism. He is hideous. The right does not fear the "left" In American politics. Scratch the surface of their pale-dry skin and you will find Nancy Pelosi and Ron Paul dry humping in the back rooms of Congress. Beautiful means targeting everything Hetero in nature. Devote your lives to committing Straight Crime after Straight Crime. Understand that Straight does not mean One Man and One Woman, Gays and Lesbians straddle the upmost rungs on the Latter to heterosuperiority. Straightness is the product of Patriarchy and Assimilation. It is the white picket fence in the suburbs, the Gays on television blaming Trannies for their unsuccessful bids at marriage, No Fats No Femmes, rape, and English Only education. Straight Crimes are the beautiful's physical manifestation in our war on Straightness and towards our ultimate goal of creating a dictatorship of the beautiful.

Fucking-Uglies will claim to be allies of the pretty; they are not. Straightness will stop at nothing to thwart a confrontation between the Queer and a fellow Hetero. Straights may even use peace and protection as fog to hide their real intentions, maintaining their status quo. Truth be told the queer does not require (and should not desire) the protection or the peace that the straight offers. The same is true for all other oppressed that comprise the beautiful.

Becoming beautiful means becoming fearless. Do not associate this beautiful fearlessness with the common definition. Accept all emotions as legitimate and powerful. To the beautiful, fearlessness does not mean without fear but fear without the possibility of stagnancy and paralysis induced by possible consequences of revolt. Instead the beautiful would Allow fear to signal caution, thought, and wisdom prior to any altercation with the Ugly. This type of fearlessness will insure a stable and safe route of travel for Beauties in Becoming.

The queer or whore or native or person of color is the sword of those on the road to Beauty. Oppression has given a resentment to these particular factions that the pimp—or—whitey—or—straighty will never know. An

advantageous position to hold. If the oppressed embraced the rage that only they know, and used it as the most powerful weapon that it is, then nothing ugly could ever truly stop the beautiful. This rage is what ensures survival. It is why, regardless of millennia of colonization, the native, the whore, the person of color, the tranny, and the queer still exist.

The Beautiful know liberation is as fictitious as god in heaven. Liberation w/ could only be achieved if time, as understood by the mentally inferior ugly, was rewound. Upon completion of such a strenuous feat, the guns would have to be dispersed evenly amongst the beautiful and the ugly would have all limbs disposed of. Being that time travel, at this point, is unfortunately an impossibility there will never be liberation. A partial and superficial liberation could come from a round up of all the uglies; to be tortured in re-education camps. This hypothetical yet equally unattainable situation might in fact turn beautiful people on and dispose of the ugly. Revenge of this type is still not complete liberation. Complete liberation is a condition only occupy-able by people, animals, or things that have never been subject to commodification. In this terrible world of the ugly ass fascists, everything beautiful has been used as a pawn for too long to ever be absolutely out-of-play. Becoming beautiful means fighting a liberatory struggle without a utopian illusion of liberation.

Revolution is as fictitious as Jesus on the cross. The Ugly has perfected the art of cooptation and recuperation. At this point ugliness is able to connaturalize itself with most emotional or philosophical states. Consequently, the beautiful are left with a non-war but certainly not a peaceful desire. All there is to be embraced by Beauties in Becoming is a debauched nihilism, a collective hedonism; not to be confused with an apathetic debauchery. It is rage that ought to be harnessed, if not gorgeously abused, to ensure survival and happiness.

Under the thumb of an omnipotent yet hidden in-plain-sight fascism, utmost stealth is something to be considered by Beauties in Becoming. Travel down the yellow brick road of struggling beauty is sometimes only accomplished by donning the master's clothes. This is true for whores of all

types, whether assimilationist or counter-cultural, whether corporate or street, whether on the path of fraudulent beauty or pounding the yellow brick. We all sacrifice ourselves to manipulate the enemy. The mirror is a weapon, smash it only after the black flag has burned. To this end, nothing is more important than keeping goals set high and consciences guarded. Discover your beauty. Keep your beauty close to your heart. Have faith in your beauty. Hold onto your beauty. Feel your beauty. Know your beauty. Caress your beauty. Finger your beauty. Eat your beauty. Fuck your beauty. Beauty is your only secret. Parade it as you must. Become as beautiful as you can. Above all, be your beauty.

Those deserving of beauty know that one day the world will belong to the beautiful. Becoming beautiful is the youth's only hope. Becoming beautiful is an extreme measure, sure, but it is the only path to happiness, love, self fulfillment, and revolt. The war may not be here, it may never come, but the beautiful have almost arrived.

Although sharpening the sword's blade while living in the non-war is essential; Becoming Beauties must dust off time's old layers of illusion. The illusionary layers being: Revolutionary War against ugly people resulting in ultimate liberation of trannies and queers. So, illuminate rage and resentment. These distinct emotional logics are the only weapons accessible to pretty people that can never be incorporated into the army of ugly pricks. Dispel your illusions for the sake of beauty. Revolutionary War is impossible. Liberation is unattainable. QueerUltraViolence is beauty.

Criminal Intimacy

Because the night belongs to lovers.

Because the night belongs to us.

— Patti Smith

On Deadness

To live in this culture is to be dead, bare. Deadness is the affect and the aspiration of dominant social membership. It is the social relationship wherein life is reduced to exchange and capital. It is everywhere; in those walking the streets without ever meeting the eyes of another, in the exchanges of service work, in the aisles of a department stores and the pews of church. In capital, in heteronormativity, in law, in morality—everywhere it is the logic of death.

The unthinkability of our desires is reiterated over and again. Power and control are written on our bodies. What is passion? Desire? Adventure? Play? What, but such catchy slogans for adverts. Our love and our appetites and our very bodies are inscribed with this culture. Capital is written on our bodies. We dare not dream. How could we conceivably want more than this?

And the agents and exertions of biopower—the boots of queerbashers, the panoptical ever-present surveillance cameras with the flashing blue lights, the sirens and guns of the police, the campaigns for gay marriage and military service, the lingering pains of monogamy, and such shapely mannequins, ad nauseum—stand everywhere erected as checkpoints guaranteeing the impossibility of anything else. Life, stripped bare, is nothing more than raw survival—banal, cold, numbing. Could it be more clear? Hetero-capitalism, this culture, this totality: It is out to destroy us.

Taking and Sharing: On Getting What's Ours

The machinery of control has rendered our very existence illegal. We've endured the criminalization and crucifixion of our bodies, our sex, our unruly genders. Raids, witch-hunts, burnings at the stake. We've occupied the space of deviants, of whores, of perverts, and abominations. This culture has rendered us criminal, and of course, in turn, we've committed our lives to crime. In the criminalization of our pleasures, we've found the pleasure to be had in crime! In being outlawed for who we are, we've discovered that we are indeed fucking outlaws!

Many blame queers for the decline of this society—we take pride in this. Some believe that we intend to shred-to-bits this civilization and its moral fabric—they couldn't be more accurate. We're often described as depraved, decadent, and revolting—but oh, they ain't seen nothing yet.

Let's be explicit: We are criminal queer anarchists and this world is not and can never be enough for us. We want to annihilate bourgeois morality and make ruins of this world. We're here to destroy what is destroying us.

Let's be speaking of revolt. We are tracing the lineage of our queer criminality and charting the demise of the social order. And oh the nectar from which we drink: lesbian pirates raging the seas, queer rioters setting

cop cars ablaze, sex parties amidst the decay of industrialism, bank robbers wearing pink triangles, mutual aid networks among sex workers and thieves, gangs of trannyfags bashing-the-fuck-back. We've been assured that each day could be our last. As such we've chosen to live as if every day is. In turn, we promise that the existent's days are numbered.

In our revolt, we are developing a form of play. These are our experiments with autonomy, power, and force. We haven't paid for anything we're wearing and we rarely pay for food. We steal from our jobs and turn tricks to get by. We fuck in public and have never come harder. We swap tips and scams amid gossip and foreplay. We've looted the shit out of places and delight in sharing the booty.

We wreck things at night and hold hands and skip all the way home. We are ever growing our informal support structures and we'll always have each other's backs. In our orgies, riots, and heists, we are articulating the collectivity of, and deepening, these ruptures.

On Criminal Intimacy, World Making, and Becoming Whatever

The ecstasy and electricity of crime is undeniable. We've felt the sweetest adrenaline rushes as we've dashed from security and blown each other on the bus. And nothing offers up the feeling of being alive more than the weight of a hammer through the facade of capital. Crime helps me get out of bed every morning.

We queers and other insurgents have developed what good folks might call a criminal intimacy. We are exploring the material and affective solidarity fostered between outlaws and rebels. In our obstruction of law, we've illegally discovered the beauty in one another. In revealing our desire to our partners in crime, we've come to know each other more intimately than legality could ever allow. In desire, we produce conflict. And in conflict

with capital, we may have found an escape route from the deadening of our lives. Our gang's discourse is conflict.

The real power expressed in our crimes isn't in the damage caused to our enemies or even in the various improvements of our material conditions (though we take pleasure in both). The power we express is in the empowerments and relationships we're creating. In our sex and our attack—when we pull down our masks and share our cache of bricks—we are expanding the possibilities of our affinity. In our crime, we create dynamic new relationships of criminal intimacies. In these possibilities, we are learning how we might, together, reduce this world to rubble.

We must make ourselves bodies without organs. Within each of us is contained a virtual pool of everything we are capable of becoming—our desires, affects, power, ways of acting, and infinite possibilities. To embody and activate these possibilities we must experiment with the ways our bodies act in conjunction with others. We commit crime together so we can unveil our criminal becoming.

We do not offer 'criminal' or 'queer' as identities, nor as categories. Criminality. Queerness. These are tools for revolt against identity and category. These are our lines of flight out of all restraint. We are in conflict with all that restricts every and each desire. We are becoming whatever. Our sole commonality is our hatred for everything that exists. Held in common, such a revolt of desire can never be assimilated into the state-form.

Right-wing talking-heads invoke the imagery of a 'culture war', waged between civil society on one side and queers on the other. We reject this model of war. Our war is a social war. The nexus of domination and class society is everywhere. Yet everywhere, too, are ruptures and points of conflict. In these fissures we exist in rebellion—we queers, criminals, whatever.

Our dirty talk and our nighttime whispers comprise a secret language. Our language of thieves and lovers is foreign to this social order, yet carries the sweetest notes in the ears of rebels. This language reveals our

potential for world making. Our conflict is space for our possible otherselves to blossom. By organizing our secret universe of shared plenty and collective-explosive possibility, we are building a new world of riot, orgy, and decadence.

Letter to the Editors

Hostis,

We read your cruel little journal* in a single sitting, deriving a great deal of enjoyment from the sandpaper-bound pages. While the journal generated much discussion in our private reading of it, we'd like to decrypt a few points to share with you at this time. In particular, we'd like to address your engagement with the anthology Queer Ultraviolence wherein a sampling of our writing appears.

Shortly after the publication of the anthology, a rather opaque and short debate played out within the anarchist milieu around the question of vengeance. If we are dissatisfied with the depth of the appraisal of the question, we are all the more grateful for your effort to raise it again. Some critics of the anthology were concerned with the emergence of a 'politics of vengeance' and saw in it a repackaging of the old ideas of 'justice' and 'accountability.' We tend to see this reading as overly simplistic, willfully conflating vengeance with that which would mediate it. Perhaps much of this misreading might have to do with the shift from a 'praxis of vengeance' (as gestured toward by the texts in Queer Ultraviolence) and the 'politics of vengeance' feared by its critics. If we conceive of vengeance, like you, as the destruction of what destroys us, then in what way is this conception

* "A Short Introduction to the Politics of Cruelty", *Hostis - Issue 1: Cruelty* (2014) <incivility.org>

undermined by the subtle shift from 'praxis' to 'politics'? How could a praxis of vengeance evade the traps of accounting or the specter of justice? Could we enact it otherwise?

We suspect that much of the problem in this misreading lies in the attempts at visibility that you (rightfully) criticized in the introduction to volume one of Hostis. The tendency toward visibility politics and representation in the Bash Back! communiques betrays a subterranean conflict between these actions (or at least the representations of them) and the moral order toward which they feign opposition. Your critique resonates with us because it highlights some of what was at stake in our own choice to disappear from that milieu. We, ourselves, always had more interest in the silence opened up by Bash Back!: the stolen feasts, shared weapons, and long nights of conspiracy. We could dwell in this forever, but we'd like to instead pose a question: why is the desire for visibility so omnipresent? What underlies the will to recognition?

We might contend that the strength of recognition's appeal directly correlates with the feelings of isolation and powerlessness felt by its object. No one yearns for recognition more than when they feel alone, when they fear their pains and joys might go unacknowledged by their friends, when they need co-conspirators the most. We understand these motivations all too well, but understanding isn't enough. To really grasp the dilemma of representations, we need to assess the tools we turn to when these anxieties rear their ugly heads. If we may, we'd like to contend that at our worst, we pursue a series of machines of recognition: political machines, juridical machines, and moral machines.

The juridical and political machines of recognition manifest themselves variously within our milieus, but they are perhaps most readily recognized in their archetypal forms: respectively, the accountability process and the call-out/communique. These machines call upon those they encounter to present evidence for analysis, to cast judgement that elicits apologies, to opine without necessarily taking sides, to condemn and/or condone. Why? To gain power, extract apologies, or maintain social

cohesion. The result is that some are lionized and others banished. Regardless of the side in which anyone falls, what remains is a toxic social world that feeds the machines with an unending supply of traumatized bodies.

Further, we could say that both these machines are expressions of a meta-machine: the moral one. The moral machine is a monster set in motion and offered to us by Christianity. While secularly coded in Western society as 'crime' or 'terrorism,' the rhetorical structure of sin – integral to the moral machine – has remained relatively untouched by progress and enlightenment. Far from rebelling against this structure, the anarchist milieu might be the most zealous enemy of 'the bad stuff' – sin. While certainly too self-aware to name the bad stuff as sin or crime or terrorism, the anarchists call it by different names: sexual assault, white supremacy, snitching, 'fucked up shit,' etc. We've even developed a word to describe all the intertwining bad stuff: kyriarchy. Whatever it's called, the structure of the machine stays consistent. The invariant component is the Category – the psychic space of the bad stuff which must be cast out. From here, the analogy follows: certain activities (sin) fall within the categories, these activities are evidence of specific subjects (sinners), and we are born into this original sin that requires us to do penance for it. Much of the ideological basis of contemporary identity politics is rooted in the concomitant moral schema that those most oppressed and victimized by these categories are inversely the most righteous, namely that "the meek shall inherit the earth."

This shouldn't be read as an apology for any of the noxious signifiers of the category, the trauma and misery caused in our lives (and the lives of our friends) by these. State collaboration, sexual violence, white supremacy is beyond reprieve. These acts are the genesis of our thirst for vengeance. We hate them; they are what destroys us and what we'd wish to destroy in turn. And yet, we must insist that the moral machine offers us nothing in the way of realizing this destruction. We implore you to recall the details of any of the numerous social dramas playing out around us. In each, assuredly, the terms and stakes of the debates are limited by this machine. Only one question is ever posed: to what extent does an action or individual fall

within the bad category, the space of sin? (Is this or isn't this transphobic? Was that sexual assault? Do we consider this snitching? Is he a fascist?) Only in the most rare cases does a discussion of a particular action or individual move beyond a flat contest over where the lines of the category are drawn, which side one is on, and who is on the other. The implication smuggled into our lives by this drama is that if something crosses the line into the category, it is bad, and that which do not cross it are good (a choir of angels until proven otherwise). We wish we could tease out the implications of these designations of good and bad, but there is nothing there to discover. The call-out always follows something like this:

Evidence → Inscription into Category (call it what you will) → [therefore, bad] → ??

{even the critique of morality rarely breaks this formula, posing 'Moralism' as the name for the Category, the bad to be excised.}

Because the "therefore, bad" is bracketed – rarely spoken – the consequences of an act are never provided, let alone discussed. This is how anarchists keep morality intact. Instead of conflict or resolution, we are left with an endlessly diffusing social drama marked by resentment, guilt-by-association, distancing, desperate attempts at proving purity; in short, mediation upon mediation. While the boundaries of the category are negotiated and policed ad nauseum, we are left without the ability to handle anything. The whole process evades the more interesting questions: Why did this happen? How did it affect us? How can we ensure it doesn't happen again? How do we get vengeance? What do we want from all this? In the will to recognition, the moral machinery obscures our actual experiences and the power we might draw from them. By attempting to render our vengeful desires legible, we sublimate them into the very moral order which we'd prefer to destroy.

To address an altogether different point: you pose 'burnout' as one of the possible consequences of a praxis of vengeance. We respectfully disagree. Vengeance, in its unmediated form is nourishing. It is the machinery – juridical, political, moral – which burns out, tears apart, and breaks us down. Even still, the question remains as to how to sustain a praxis of vengeance in spite of these traps. Years ago we wrote:

> "Our dirty talk and our nighttime whispers comprise a secret language. Our language of thieves and lovers is foreign to this social order, yet carries the sweetest notes in the ears of rebels. This language reveals our potential for world making. Our conflict is space for our possible other-selves to blossom. By organizing our secret universe of shared plenty and collective-explosive possibility, we are building a world of riot, orgy and decadence."

While committing this sentiment to page may have been a youthful mistake, we still hold it to be true. If we are to sustain a project of vengeance and enjoyment, we need to build a world in which we share and nourish that praxis. That world needs to be hidden, encrypted, ineffable, and hostile to the schemes by which others would represent it, surveil it, or render it visible. There will be betrayals and conflict in this world; how could there not be? The point is to deal with these situations without activating the machines we've detailed above.

Our proposal: direct, forceful, unmediated conflict; conflict outside of language, opaque to would-be spectators; conflict which eschews the machines of recognition; attack our enemies, but also undermine any who'd try to build political capital from those attacks. This means baseball bats to the skulls of our rapists, but without the subsequent communiques, programs, and diffuse social games.

We'll end with a story: A black trans woman was murdered in our neighborhood. Her name was Chanel, and she was turning a $20 trick before a putrid John shot her three times in the head. He was shortly thereafter

arrested, but our affective responses and desires for vengeance don't square with juridical process. A call went out for a march, we answered, and a mob set out. Torches were lit, a masked individual announced the location of his house. Silently, without slogans – not out of somberness but seething rage – the torch-lit procession moved through the cold night. Upon reaching his house, windows fell away to hammer blows and the fire was thrown inside. We can scarcely describe the feeling of seeing this all this transpire. It was cruel, cathartic, redemptive, and sublimely indifferent to the managerial solutions offered by this world. While some wild ones were still attacking we could hear the distant wail of enemy sirens and made our way home through the night. While departing, we overheard some teenagers excitedly ask – do you think this was Bash Back!? – unaware that such a formation hadn't existed in that town for years. We laughed and hurried off. No communique was ever written, only whispers of this action remain. We may never know the brilliant ones who brought fire that night, but our worlds briefly opened onto one another in that moment and we carry that warm glimpse with us still.

best,

Mary Nardini Gang

Toward the Queerest Insurrection

I

Some will read "queer" as synonymous with "gay and lesbian" or "LGBT." This reading falls short. While those who would fit within the constructions of "L," "G," "B" or "T" could fall within the discursive limits of queer, queer is not a stable area to inhabit. Queer is not merely another identity that can be tacked onto a list of neat social categories, nor the quantitative sum of our identities. Rather, it is the qualitative position of opposition to presentations of stability — an identity that problematizes the manageable limits of identity. Queer is a territory of tension, defined against the dominant narrative of white hetero monogamous patriarchy, but also by an affinity with all who are marginalized, otherized and oppressed. Queer is the abnormal, the strange, the dangerous. Queer involves our sexuality and our gender, but so much more. It is our desire and fantasies and more still. Queer is the cohesion of everything in conflict with the heterosexual capitalist world. Queer is a total rejection of the regime of the Normal.

II

As queers we understand Normalcy. Normal, is the tyranny of our condition; reproduced in all of our relationships. Normalcy is violently reiterated in every minute of every day. We understand this Normalcy as the Totality. The Totality being the interconnection and overlapping of all oppression and misery. The Totality is the state. It is capitalism. It is civilization and empire. The totality is fence post crucifixion. It is rape and murder at the hands of police. It is "Str8 Acting" and "No Fatties or Femmes." It is Queer Eye for the Straight Guy. It is the brutal lessons taught to those who can't achieve Normal. It is every way we've limited ourselves or learned to hate our bodies. We understand Normalcy all too well.

III

When we speak of social war, we do so because purist class analysis is not enough for us. What does a marxist economic worldview mean to a survivor of bashing? To a sex worker? To a homeless, teenage runaway? How can class analysis, alone as paradigm for a revolution, promise liberation to those of us journeying beyond our assigned genders and sexualities? The Proletariat as revolutionary subject marginalizes all whose lives don't fit in the model of heterosexual-worker. Lenin and Marx have never fucked the ways we have. We need something a bit more thorough something equipped to come with teethgnashing to all the intricacies of our misery. Simply put, we want to make ruins of domination in all of its varied and interlacing forms. This struggle inhabiting every social relationship is what we know as social war. It is both the process and the condition of a conflict with this totality.

IV

In the discourse of queer, we are talking about a space of struggle against this totality — against normalcy. By "queer," we mean "social war." And when we speak of queer as a conflict with all domination, we mean it

V

See, we've always been the other, the alien, the criminal. The story of queers in this civilization has always been the narrative of the sexual deviant, the constitutional psychopathic inferior, the traitor, the freak, the moral imbecile. We've been excluded at the border, from labor, from familial ties. We've been forced into concentration camps, into sex slavery, into prisons. The normal, the straight, the american family has always constructed itself in opposition to the queer.

Straight is not queer. White is not of color. Healthy does not have HIV. Man is not woman. The discourses of heterosexuality, whiteness and capitalism reproduce themselves into a model of power. For the rest of us, there is death. In his work, Jean Genet[1] asserts that the life of a queer, is one of exile that all of the totality of this world is constructed to marginalize and exploit us. He posits the queer as the criminal. He glorifies homosexuality[2] and criminality as the most beautiful and lovely forms of conflict with the bourgeois world. He writes of the secret worlds of rebellion and joy inhabited by criminals and queers.

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1 Jean Genet was a queer, criminal, vagabond who spent his early life traveling around Europe leaving a trail of sordid affairs in his wake. He was sentenced to life in prison after nearly a dozen arrests for theft, prostitution, vagrancy and lewd behavior. While in prison he took up writing and inspired Sarte and Picasso to petition the French government for his release. After his release, he was drafted into the military, only to be released for fucking fellow soldiers. The remainder of his life was marked by flirtations with various revolutionaries, philosophers, uprisings and intifadas. Genet's life is a beautiful example of revolutionary criminal queer decadence.

2 "homosexuality" used only as Genet uses it. When speaking of queers, we mean infinitely more.

Quoth Genet,

> "Excluded by my birth and tastes from the social order, I was not aware of its diversity. Nothing in the world was irrelevant: the stars on a general's sleeve, the stock-market quotations, the olive harvest, the style of the judiciary, the wheat exchange, flower beds. Nothing. This order, fearful and feared, whose details were all interrelated, had a meaning: my exile."
>
> — *The Thief's Journal (1973)*

VI

A fag is bashed because his gender presentation is far too femme. A poor transman can't afford his life-saving hormones. A sex worker is murdered by their client. A genderqueer persyn is raped because ze just needed to be "fucked straight." Four black lesbians are sent to prison for daring to defend themselves against a straight-male attacker.[3] Cops beat us on the streets and our bodies are being destroyed by pharmaceutical companies because we can't give them a dime. Queers experience, directly with our bodies, the violence and domination of this world. Class, Race, Gender, Sexuality, Ability; while often these interrelated and overlapping categories of oppression are lost to abstraction, queers are forced to physically understand each. We've had our bodies and desires stolen from us, mutilated and sold back to us as a model of living we can never embody.

[Michel] Foucault says that

> "power must be understood in the first instance as the multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organization; as the processes which, through ceaseless struggles and confrontations, transforms, strengthens or reverses them; as the support which

3 Free the New Jersey 4. And let's free everyone else while we're at it.

these force relations find in one another, thus forming a chain or system, or on the contrary, the disjunctions and contradictions which isolate them from one another; and lastly, as the strategies in which they take effect, whose general design or institutional crystallization is embodied in the state apparatus, in the formulation of the law, in the various social hegemonies."

—The History of Sexuality, Volume I (1978)

We experience the complexity of domination and social control amplified through heterosexuality. When police kill us, we want them dead in turn. When prisons entrap our bodies and rape us because our genders aren't similarly contained, of course we want fire to them all. When borders are erected to construct a national identity absent of people of color and queers, we see only one solution: every nation and border reduced to rubble.

Cooper's Donuts was an all night donut shop on a seedy stretch of Main Street in Los Angeles. It was a regular hangout for street queens and queer hustlers at all hours of the night. Police harassment was a regular fixture of the Cooper's, but one May night in 1959, the queers fought back. What started with customers throwing donuts at the police escalated into full-on street fighting. In the ensuing chaos, all of the donut-wielding rebels escaped into the night.

VII

The perspective of queers within the heteronormative world is a lens through which we can critique and attack the apparatus of capitalism. We can analyze the ways in which Medicine, the Prison System, the Church, the State, Marriage, the Media, Borders, the Military and Police are used to control and destroy us. More importantly, we can use these cases to articulate a cohesive criticism of every way that we are alienated and dominated.

Queer is a position from which to attack the normative more, a position from which to understand and attack the ways in which normal is reproduced and reiterated. In destabilizing and problematizing normalcy, we can destabilize and become a problem for the Totality.

The history of organized queers was borne out of this position. The most marginalized transfolk, people of color, sex workers — have always been the catalysts for riotous explosions of queer resistance. These explosions have been coupled with a radical analysis wholeheartedly asserting that the liberation for queer people is intrinsically tied to the annihilation of capitalism and the state. It is no wonder, then, that the first people to publicly speak of sexual liberation in this country were anarchists, or that those in the last century who struggled for queer liberation also simultaneously struggled against capitalism, racism and patriarchy and empire. This is our history.

One weekend in August of 1966 — Compton's, a twenty four hour cafeteria in San Francisco's Tenderloin neighborhood was buzzing with its usual late-night crowd of drag queens, hustlers, slummers, cruisers, runaway teens and neighborhood regulars. The restaurant's management became annoyed by a noisy young crowd of queens at one table who seemed to be spending a lot of time without spending a lot of money, and it called the police to roust them. A surly police officer, accustomed to manhandling Compton's clientele with impunity, grabbed the arm of one of the queens and tried to drag her away. She unexpected threw her coffee in his face, however, and a melee erupted: Plates, trays, cups and silverware flew through the air at the startled police who ran outside and called for backup. The customer's turned over the tables, smashed the plate-glass windows and poured onto the streets. When the police reinforcements arrived, street fighting broke out all throughout the Compton's vicinity. Drag queens beat the police with their heavy purses and kicked them with their high-heeled shoes. A police car was vandalized, a newspaper box was burnt to the ground and general havoc was raised all throughout the Tenderloin.

VIII

If history proves anything, it is that capitalism has a treacherous recuperative tendency to pacify radical social movements. It works rather simply, actually. A group gains privilege and power within a movement, and shortly thereafter sell their comrades out. Within a couple years of stonewall, affluent gay white males had thoroughly marginalized everyone that had made their movement possible and abandoned their revolution with them. It was once that to be queer was to be in direct conflict with the forces of control and domination. Now, we are faced with a condition of utter stagnation and sterility. As always, Capital recuperated brick-throwing street queens into suited politicians and activists. There are logcabin Republicans and "stonewall" refers to gay Democrats. There are gay energy drinks and a "queer" television station that wages war on the minds, bodies and esteem of impressionable youth.

What began as an early morning raid on June 28th 1969 at New York's Stonewall Inn, escalated to four days of rioting throughout Greenwich Village. Police conducted the raid as usual; targeting people of color, transpeople and gender variants for harassment and violence. It all changed, though, when a bull-dyke resisted her arrest and several street queens began throwing bottles and rocks at the police. The police began beating folks, but soon people from all over the neighborhood rushed to the scene, swelling the rioters numbers to over 2,000. The vastly outnumbered police barricaded themselves inside the bar, while an uprooted parking meter was used as a battering ram by the crowd. Molotov cocktails were thrown at the bar. Riot police arrived on scene, but were unable to regain control of the situation. Drag queens danced a conga line and sang songs amidst the street fighting to mock the inability of the police to re-establish order. The rioting continued until dawn, only to be picked up again at nightfall of the subsequent days.

The "LGBT" political establishment has become a force of assimilation, gentrification, capital and statepower. Gay identity has become both a marketable commodity and a device of withdrawal from struggle against domination. Now they don't critique marriage, military or the state. Rather we have campaigns for queer assimilation into each. Their politics is advocacy for such grievous institutions, rather than the annihilation of them all. "Gays

can kill poor people around the world as well as straight people!" "Gays can hold the reigns of the state and capital as well straight people!" "We are just like you." Assimilationists want nothing less than to construct the homosexual as normal — white, monogamous, wealthy, 2.5 children, SUVs with a white picket fence. This construction, of course, reproduces the stability of heterosexuality, whiteness, patriarchy, the gender binary, and capitalism itself.

If we genuinely want to make ruins of this totality, we need to make a break. We don't need inclusion into marriage, the military and the state. We need to end them. No more gay politicians, CEOs and cops. We need to swiftly and immediately articulate a wide gulf between the politics of assimilation and the struggle for liberation.

On the night of May 21st 1979, in what has come to be known as the White Night Riots, the queer community of San Francisco was outraged and wanted justice for the murder of Harvey Milk. The outraged queers went to city hall where they smashed the windows and glass door of the building. The riotous crowd took to the streets, disrupting traffic, smashing storefronts and car windows, disabling buses and setting twelve San Francisco Police cruisers on fire. The rioting spread throughout the city as others joined in on the fun!

We need to rediscover our riotous inheritance as queer anarchists. We need to destroy constructions of normalcy, and create instead a position based in our alienation from this normalcy, and one capable of dismantling it. We must use these positions to instigate breaks, not just from the assimilationist mainstream, but from capitalism itself. These positions can become tools of a social force ready to create a complete rupture with this world. Our bodies have been born into conflict with this social order. We need to deepen that conflict and make it spread.

IX

In 1970, Stonewall veterans, Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera founded STAR Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries. They opened the STAR house, a radical version of the "house" culture of black and latina queer communities. The house provided a safe and free place for queer and trans street kids to stay. Marsha and Sylvia as the "House Mothers" hustled to pay rent so that the kids would not be forced to. Their "children" scavenged and stole food so that everyone in the house could eat. That's what we call mutual aid!

Susan Stryker writes that the state acts to

> "regulate bodies, in ways both great and small, by enmeshing them within norms and expectations that determine what kinds of lives are deemed livable or useful and by shutting down the space of possibility and imaginative transformation where peoples' lives begin to exceed and escape the state's use for them." — *Transgender History (2008)*

We must create space wherein it is possible for desire to flourish. This space, of course, requires conflict with this social order. To desire, in a world structured to confine desire, is a tension we live daily. We must understand this tension so that we can become powerful through it — we must understand it so that it can tear our confinement apart.

This terrain, born in rupture, must challenge oppression in its entirety. This of course, means total negation of this world. We must become bodies in revolt. We need to delve into and indulge in power. We can learn the strength of our bodies in struggle for space for our desires. In desire we'll find the power to destroy not only what destroys us, but also those who aspire to turn us into a gay mimicry of that which destroys us. We must be in conflict with regimes of the normal. This means to be at war with everything. If we desire a world without restraint, we must tear this one to the ground. We must live beyond measure and love and desire in ways most

devastating. We must come to understand the feeling of social war. We can learn to be a threat, we can become the queerest of insurrections.

X

In the time between the Stonewall Riots and the outbreak of HIV, the queer community of New York saw the rise of a culture of public sex. Queers had orgies in squatted buildings, in abandoned semi-trucks, on the piers and in bars and clubs all along Christopher street. This is our idea of voluntary association of free individuals! Many mark this as the most sexually liberated time this country has ever seen. Though, the authors of this zine wholeheartedly believe we can outdo them.

To be clear: We've despaired that we could never be as well-dressed or cultured as the Fab Five. We found nothing in Brokeback Mountain. We've spent far too long shuffling through hallways with heads hung low. We don't give a shit about marriage or the military. But oh we've had the hottest sex everywhere in all the ways we aren't supposed to and the other boys at school definitely can't know about it.

And when I was sixteen a would be bully pushed me and called me a faggot. I hit him in the mouth. The intercourse of my fist and his face was far sexier and more liberating than anything MTV ever offered our generation. With the pre cum of desire on my lips I knew from then on that I was an anarchist. In short, this world has never been enough for us. We say to it, "we want everything, motherfucker, try to stop us!"

let’s get decadent!

filth is our politics!

filth is our life!

"Convicts' garb is striped pink and white. Though it was at my heart's bidding that I chose the universe wherein I delight, I at least have the power of finding therein the many meanings I wish to find: there is a close relationship between flowers and convicts. The fragility and delicacy of the former are of the same nature as the brutal insensitivity of the latter. Should I have to portray a convict —or a criminal—I shall bedeck them with flowers that, as they disappear beneath them, they will themselves become a flower, a gigantic and new one. Toward what is known as evil, I lovingly pursued an adventure which led me to prison. Those doomed to evil, of their own volition, or owing to an accident which has been chosen for them, they plunge lucidly and without complaining into a reproachful, ignominious element, lie that into which love, if it is profound, hurls human beings. Erotic play discloses a nameless world which is revealed by the nocturnal language of lovers. Such language is not written down. It is whispered into the ear at night in a hoarse voice. At dawn it is forgotten. Repudiating the virtues of your world, criminals hopelessly agree to organize a forbidden universe. They agree to live in it. The air there is nauseating; they can breath it. But—criminals are remote from you—as in love, they turn away and turn me away from the world and its laws. Theirs smells of sweat, sperm, and blood. In short, to my body and my thirsty soul it offers devotion. It was because their world contains these erotic conditions that I was bent on evil. I do not want to conceal in this journal the other reasons which made me a thief. With fanatical care, "jealous care," I prepared for my adventure as one arranges a couch or a room for love; I was hot for crime."

—Jean Genet, *The Thief's Journal*